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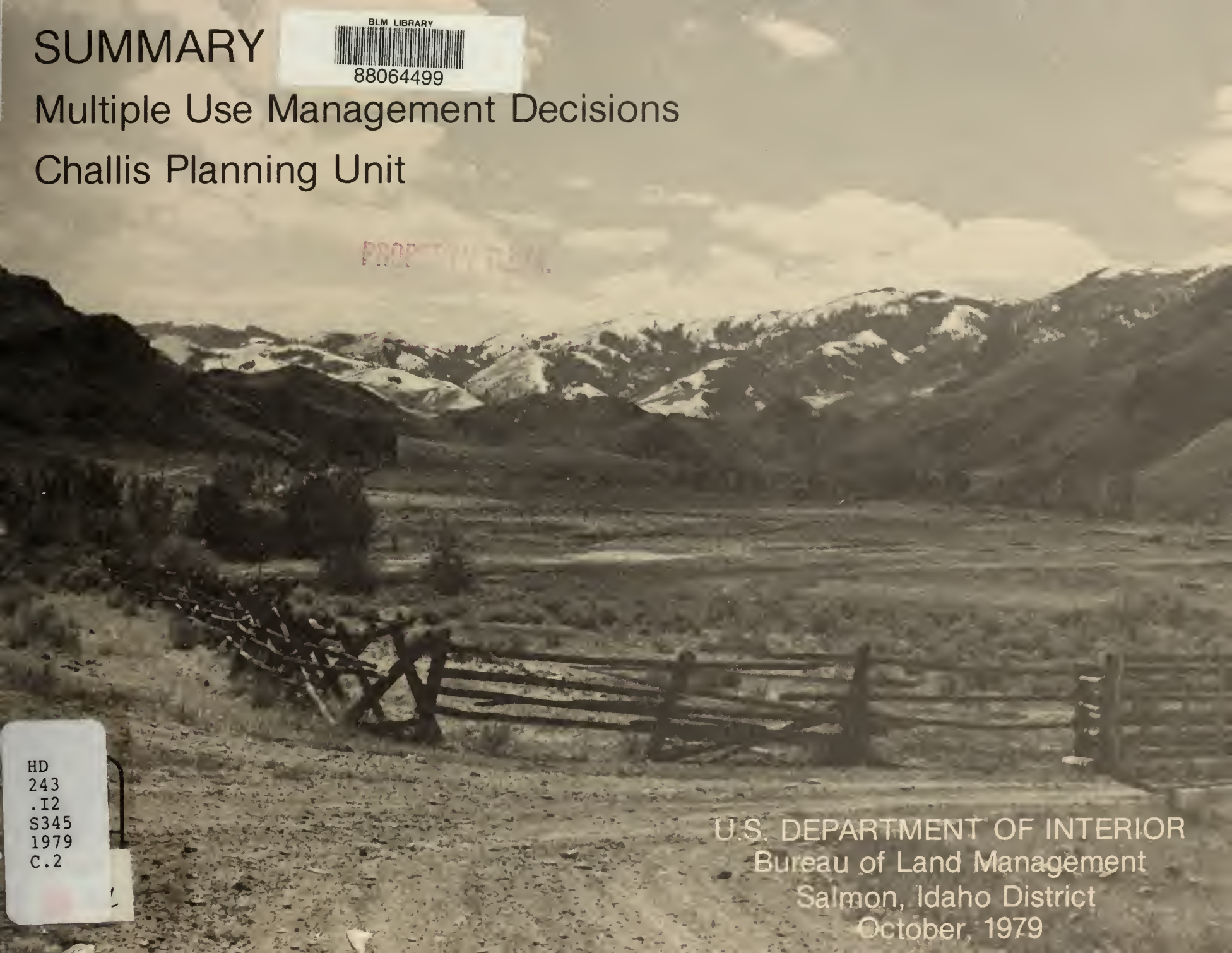
SUMMARY

Multiple Use Management Decisions

Challis Planning Unit



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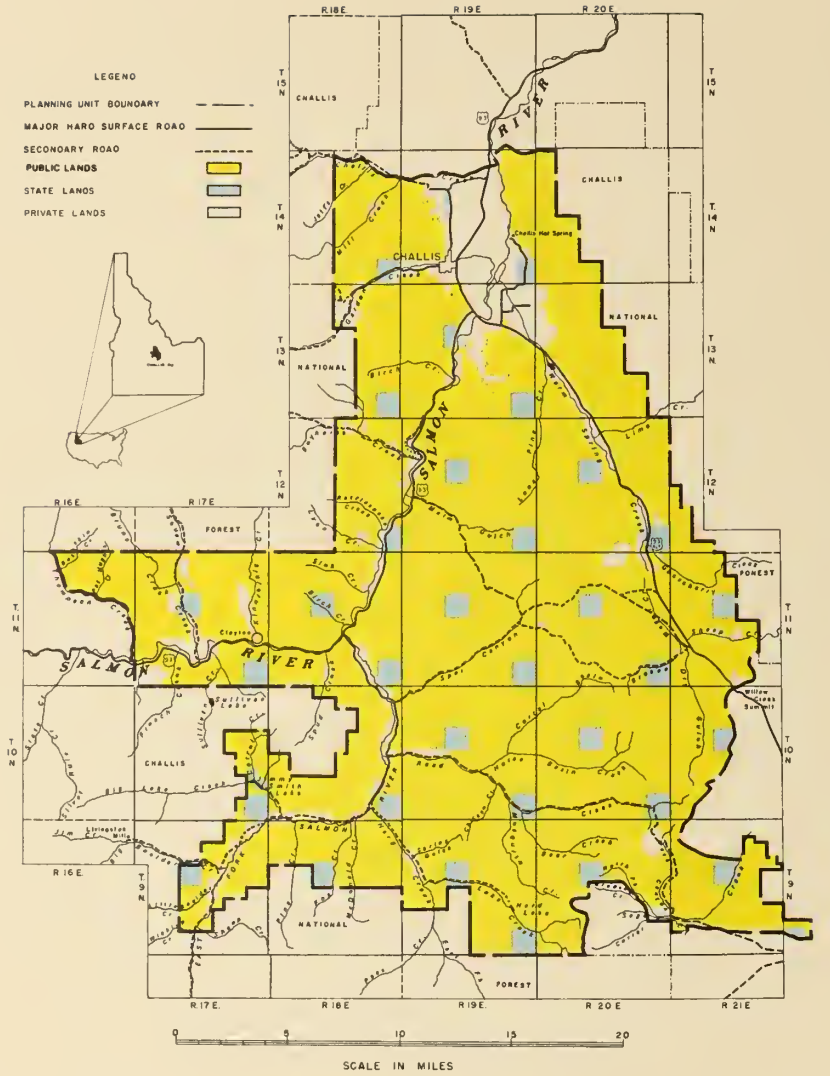
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR
Bureau of Land Management
Salmon, Idaho District
October, 1979



LAND OWNERSHIP STATUS

ID. 98004199

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities for water, fish, land, wildlife, mineral, park and recreational resources. Indian and Territorial Affairs are other concerns of America's "Department of Natural Resources."

The Department works to assure the wisest choice in managing all our resources so each will make its full contribution to a better United States — now and in the future.

The Bureau of Land Management, an agency of the Department of the Interior, is charged with the administration of programs for conservation and development of the public lands and resources. In Idaho, there are six Bureau of Land Management districts with offices in Boise, Burley, Idaho Falls, Salmon, Shoshone and Coeur d'Alene.

Cover: Salmon River Valley
View from Idaho "Scenic Route" 75

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THE CHALLIS AREA

Its Town

Its River

Introduction

The increased demand for a variety of uses of public lands such as livestock grazing, wildlife, recreation, minerals, watershed, and sale of lands prompted the Bureau of Land Management to undertake the preparation of comprehensive land use plans to allocate the uses of these resources. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act, or BLM Organic Act, now requires that the use of BLM lands be projected by such a land use plan.

The planning system used by the BLM includes an analysis of detailed resource inventories to describe existing situations and to determine opportunities for managing lands, minerals, recreation, forestry, wildlife, watershed and livestock forage. "Best" management recommendations for each particular resource are developed which often result in overlaps or management conflicts between resources. Tentative solutions to these competing or incompatible resource uses are then presented as multiple use recommendations. After a thorough analysis, the District Manager adopts a set of decisions – called a Management Framework Plan (MFP) to indicate how the public lands in the unit can best be managed for multiple uses. The MFP provides direction and guidance for all subsequent actions in the unit. Public participation involving organized groups, interested individuals, state and local government, and others is used throughout the planning process.

In the Salmon District, resource specialists began gathering resource data concerning the Challis Planning Unit in 1973. A concerted effort was launched in 1978 to complete an MFP for the unit. Staff specialists recorded all available data about the various resources. Personal contacts were made and public meetings were held to obtain additional information and to help develop management recommendations concerning the resources within the Challis Planning Unit. After a thorough analysis, a set of multiple use recommendations was brought to the public for review. The numerous comments and suggestions were fully considered before the formulation of the MFP. The Challis MFP was completed in July 1979.

The Challis MFP is summarized in this document. The complete document is available for review in the Salmon District Office. The MFP provides management direction and guidance as well as a framework for future BLM actions in this unit. Specific actions and development of proposed actions must also be in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. In accordance with this requirement, the impacts of the range program were evaluated in the "Supplemental Environmental Statement on a Revised Range Management Program for the Challis Planning Unit".

It is anticipated that the MFP will be revised from time to time to meet the needs of the people and to cope with changing local and national conditions. Major revisions will be accomplished with full public participation.

My staff and I wish to thank everyone who assisted in this effort, especially those attending our public meetings. We look forward to working with you in the future to formulate and update the district land use plans.

Harry R. Finlayson

Harry R. Finlayson
District Manager
Salmon District

Salmon, Idaho
October, 1979

General Description

The Challis Planning Unit consists of 309,609 acres of Federal lands, 18,815 acres of State land and 36,327 acres of private land for a total of 375,380 acres. An additional 20,513 acres of Federal land in Peck's Canyon was made a part of the Challis Unit for Allotment Management purposes only.

The estimated population within the Challis Unit is 1,200 people. The largest concentration of people is at Challis with a population of 784. The village of Clayton has a population of 36. The remainder of the population is on small farms and ranches along the stream and valley bottoms, with the exception of a small trailer court, several small subdivisions and scattered homes along the Salmon River.

Agriculture continues to be a primary source of income for the area. However, recreation is a close second providing much of the income within the unit. Development of the proposed Cyprus Thompson Creek Mining Project on Bruno Creek will have a significant impact on the economy and the social structure of Challis and Custer County.

The lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management are currently being used for livestock grazing, recreation, mining, wildlife habitat, watershed, wild horses, timber and fisheries.

The general vegetative types include sagebrush/grass, shadscale/grass, mountain mahogany and Douglas-fir. Yearly precipitation varies from 7 inches in Challis (lowest in the State) to 25 inches in the Jerry Peak area. Elevation varies from 4,824 feet at McNabb's Point on the north side of the unit to 10,015 feet at Jerry Peak on the divide between the Salmon River and Big Lost River Drainage.

Major Issues And Problems

Vegetation production is limited due to a short growing season and to distribution of effective moisture preceding and during the early part of the growing season.

In areas where most of the domestic livestock grazing occurs, annual precipitation ranges from about 7—16 inches with an average of about 12 inches.

Some of the unit has water of high quality. However, water quality in most of the unit is altered by the influx and deposition of silt. Siltation problems arise because the area is subjected to frequent high intensity, short duration, cloudburst-type rainstorms in the summer months.

Currently, domestic livestock in the Challis Unit graze the Federal lands primarily in the spring and early summer with some late summer and fall use. Usually, each range is grazed at the same time and in the same manner each year.

In 1971, at the time of passage of legislation protecting the wild horses and burros, there were about 150 head of wild horses in the area. In 1978, prior to foaling, 586 were counted. Forage needs to support this number of horses equals 8,790 AUMs. Essentially, food preferences of horses duplicate the spring to summer preferences of cattle.

The factors of vegetation production capability, precipitation amounts and pattern, cloudburst frequency, livestock grazing patterns and wild horse numbers for the most part determine the condition of the range. Range condition refers to the relative health or production of a range in relation to its vegetation potential. Overall, vegetation within the Challis Unit is in fair to poor condition.

Trends of range condition vary in the unit. The majority of the unit is in fair condition with a static trend. A portion is in poor condition with deterioration continuing and only about 13,000 acres show improvement. In general, the lower elevation areas near water are in the poorest condition, while higher elevation areas away from water are in fair to good condition. Domestic livestock make less use of steep slopes and some ridgetops that are not close to water. Wild horses and game animals, however, graze these areas.

Major big game animals found in the Challis Planning Unit are deer, elk, antelope and bighorn sheep. Other game species include blue grouse, sage grouse and chukar partridge. In total 291 terrestrial wildlife species have been identified in the unit (72 mammals, 204 birds, and 15 amphibian and reptile species).

Ten streams within the area serve as spawning and/or rearing areas for either steelhead, trout or chinook salmon. Sockeye salmon migrate through the unit to spawning areas in the headwaters of the Salmon River drainage. Resident fish species include rainbow, cutthroat, Dolly Varden, brook trout, and whitefish. Major problems pertinent to sustaining fish populations, particularly the anadromous species, are diversion of streams (resulting in direct fish loss through unscreened diversions) and siltation of streams.

Significant MFP Decisions Regarding Uses And Resources In The Challis Unit

The uses and resources of the planning unit are listed in order of relative importance. It should be noted that the ultimate basis for management decision is the LAND! Accordingly, geologic and climatic factors, including soils (soil texture, soil depth, parent materials, etc.) and topography — with resulting vegetation limitations, were major considerations in the Challis MFP decisions.

The following list of decisions is not complete. Persons wishing to see the complete official document may examine it at the Salmon District Office of the Bureau of Land Management, Salmon, Idaho.

Range Management

The entire unit is presently used for livestock grazing. There are 38 livestock operators who run for a portion of the year on lands in the unit. Approximately 8,000 cattle and 90 horses are licensed, annually consuming an average of 17,500 animal unit months of forage.

Presently there are twelve allotments with only one (Herd Creek) under an Allotment Management Plan. The proposed allotments (being evaluated in the EIS) total 16 including Herd Creek.

There are 38 holders of BLM grazing permits in the area who, during the last eight years, have averaged a total of 17,444 AUMs of grazing use. Their total qualified use is 21,900 AUMs, but for various reasons an average of 4,450 AUMs (20%) have not been utilized. Of the 38 operators, almost half (16) have fewer than 100 head of cattle. Seventeen operators (45%) have herd sizes between 100 and 300 head. Five operators run more than 300 head. So, as 87% of the operators in the area run less than 300 head, a marginal situation exists for family operations in today's economy.

In 1977 there were approximately $192,000 in livestock income generated by operators in the planning area. This was 35% of farm-related personal income for Custer County.

Table A compares existing qualified use with present use (8-year average). Also shown is a comparison of recommended AUMs for the Proposed Action and Alternative 3 (minimum constraints on livestock grazing).

This decision implements portions of the Proposed Action and Alternative 3 of the Challis Supplemental Environmental Statement to adjust livestock grazing from the 8-year average of 17,444 AUMs to 12,200 AUMs (31% of active use). Planned

TABLE A

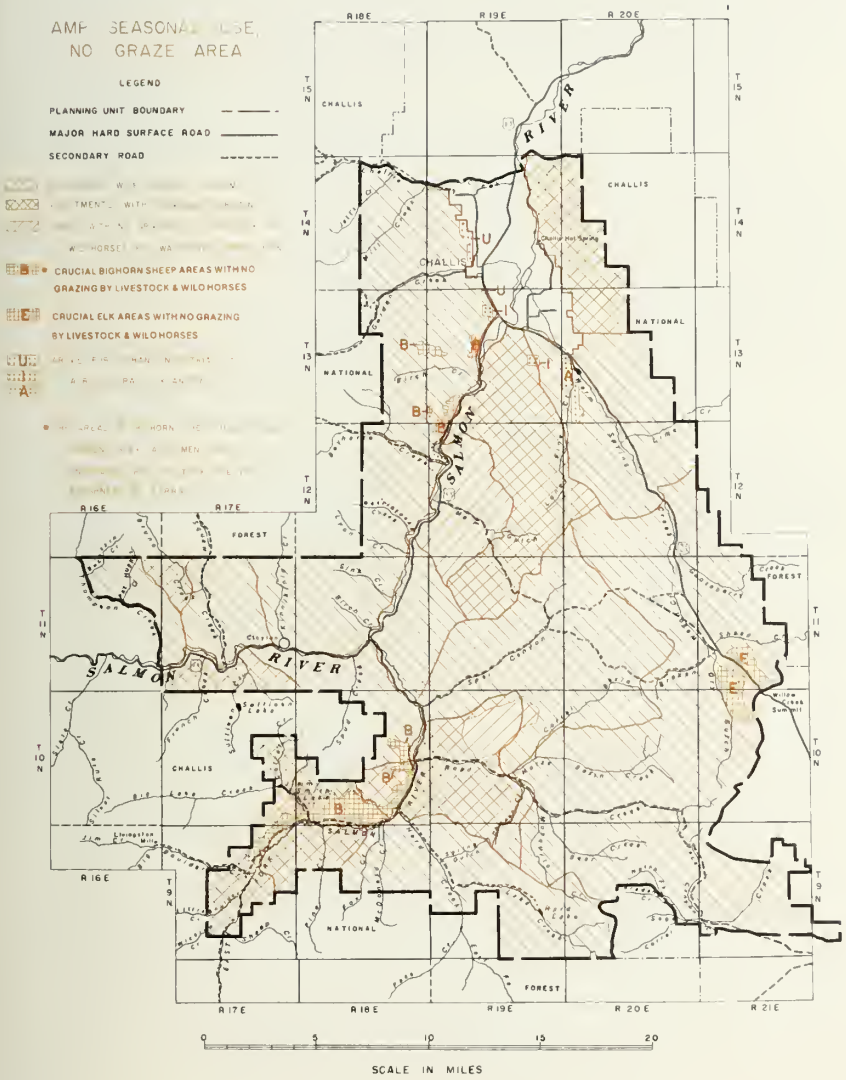
LIVESTOCK USE LEVELS IN IMPACT STATEMENT

Allotment	Qualified Use (AUMs)	Present Use 8–Year Average (AUMs)	Proposed Action (AUMs)	Alternative 3 Minimum Constraints on Livestock (AUMs)
Red Lake	1,667	1,062	613	838
Herd Creek	1,411	1,188	1,411	1,411
Road Creek	631	548	346	580
Bruno Creek	134	127	85	130
Round Valley	701	363	438	469
San Felipe/Peck Canyon	8,375	7,393	3,484	3,788
Warm Springs	4,295	3,507	2,201	2,738
Garden Creek	1,673	876	600	768
Bald Mountain	980	614	296	425
Thompson Creek	171	126	51	124
Split Hoof	282	204	118	201
Squaw Creek	524	444	133	199
Spud Creek	265	240	202	236
Pine Creek	181	179	181	181
East Fork	503	492	192	254
Sullivan Creek	107	81	85	123
TOTAL	21,900	17,444	10,436	12,465

TABLE B

PLANNED LIVESTOCK USE
DURING THE INITIAL PERIOD

Allotment	Permitted Use (AUMs)
Red Lake	838
Herd Creek	1,411
Road Creek	346
Bruno Creek	130
Round Valley	469
San Felipe/Peck Canyon	3,788
Warm Springs	2,738
Garden Creek	768
Bald Mountain	425
Thompson Creek	51
Split Hoof	201
Squaw Creek	199
Spud Creek	236
Pine Creek	181
East Fork	254
Sullivan Creek	85
TOTAL	12,120


NO GRAZE AREA
LEGEND
PLANNING UNIT BOUNDARY
MAJOR HARD SURFACE ROAD
SECONDARY ROAD
CRUCIAL BIGHORN SHEEP AREAS WITH NO GRAZING BY LIVESTOCK & WILD HORSES
CRUCIAL ELK AREAS WITH NO GRAZING BY LIVESTOCK & WILD HORSES
SALMON RIVER
CHALLIS
NATIONAL FOREST
SCALE IN MILES

PROPOSED GRAZING TREATMENTS AND NO GRAZING AREAS

livestock use for each allotment during the initial period is shown in Table B.

The decision will implement intensive grazing management (rest-rotation/deferred rotation) on approximately 240,000 acres. On approximately 70,000 acres allotments will be managed on a seasonal use basis.

The major range management decisions will:

PROVIDE 12,120 AUMs FORAGE FOR LIVESTOCK AS INDICATED IN TABLE B.

LIMIT WILDLIFE AND WILD HORSE NUMBERS TO THE LEVELS PROVIDED FOR IN THE FORAGE ALLOCATION PROCESS.

After reasonable numbers of wildlife and wild horses were established and watershed requirements considered, 12,120 AUMs were allocated for livestock use. This represents the "best mix" which could be developed to insure a continuing supply of forage and still allow for improvement in range condition.

IMPLEMENT GRAZING SYSTEMS IN NINE ALLOTMENTS.

PROVIDE SEASONAL GRAZING IN SEVEN ALLOTMENTS.

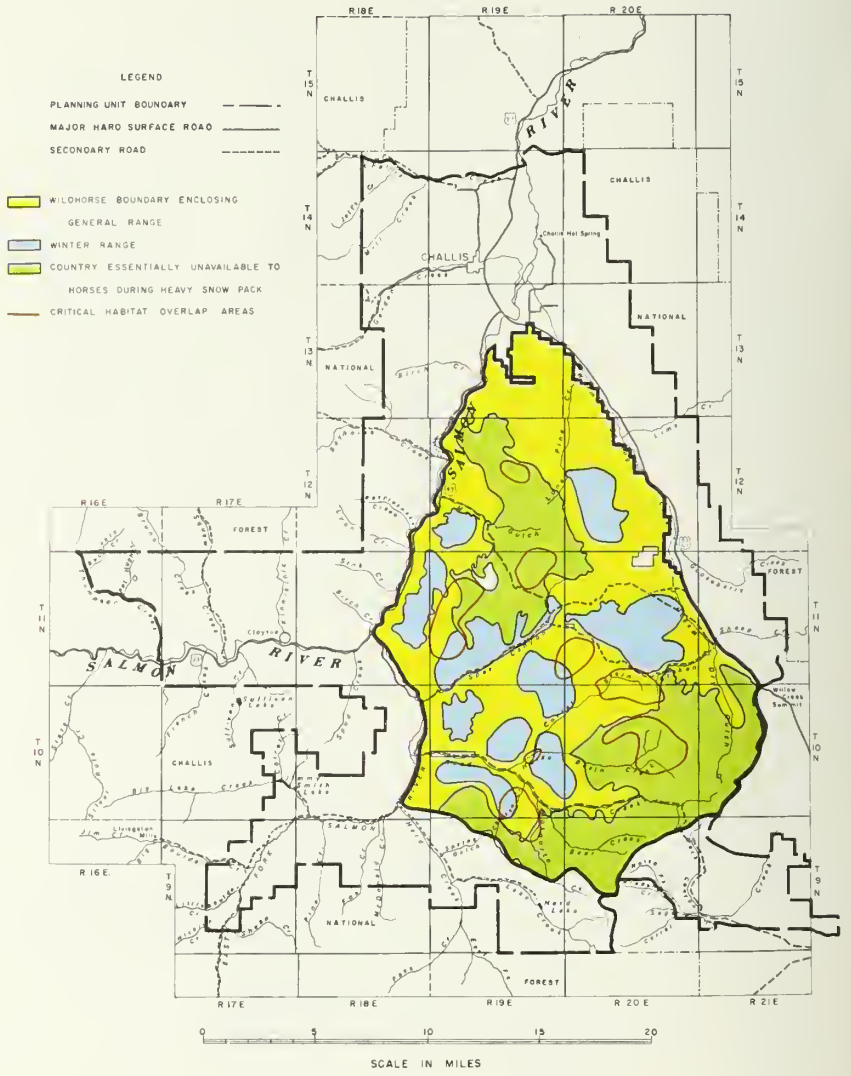
(Range Management continued next page)

(Range Management continued)

More intensive livestock management is needed in order to improve the areas currently classified as poor or fair condition. Grazing systems in nine allotments will provide combinations of rest, deferred grazing, different season of use, and other measures aimed at improving the quality and quantity of forage. Seasonal grazing will be allowed in seven allotments because these areas are not well-suited to development of grazing systems and can be improved in other ways.

Typical Challis Unit Rangeland, San Felipe Allotment

Wild Horses



WILD HORSE BOUNDARIES

Approximately 600–700 wild horses plus this year's colts graze yearlong on approximately 157,435 acres of public lands in the unit mainly on the Warm Springs, San Felipe, Road Creek and Red Lake Allotments.

Major decisions affecting wild horses will:

RETAIN FENCES AND ALLOW USE OF OFF–ROAD VEHICLES ON THE WILD HORSE RANGE.

Recommendations to restrict these uses and developments are rejected as they will not significantly conflict with the management of the wild horse herds.

ESTABLISH BOUNDARIES OF THE WILD HORSE MANAGEMENT AREA CONSISTENT WITH THE RANGE UTILIZED AT THE PASSAGE OF THE WILD HORSE AND BURRO ACT (PL 92–195).

Boundaries are needed to effectively manage the horse herd along with other resources.

FURNISH YEARLONG FORAGE FOR 150 HEAD OF WILD HORSES IN THE RED LAKE ROAD CREEK, SAN FELIPE/PECK CANYON, WARM SPRINGS AND SPLIT HOOF ALLOTMENTS (2,250 AUMs).

This will provide numbers that are adequate to maintain a healthy, vigorous herd of a size that is large enough to provide easy public viewing. Gathering of excess numbers will commence in late summer or early fall of 1979, at a time when injury to foals will be minimal.

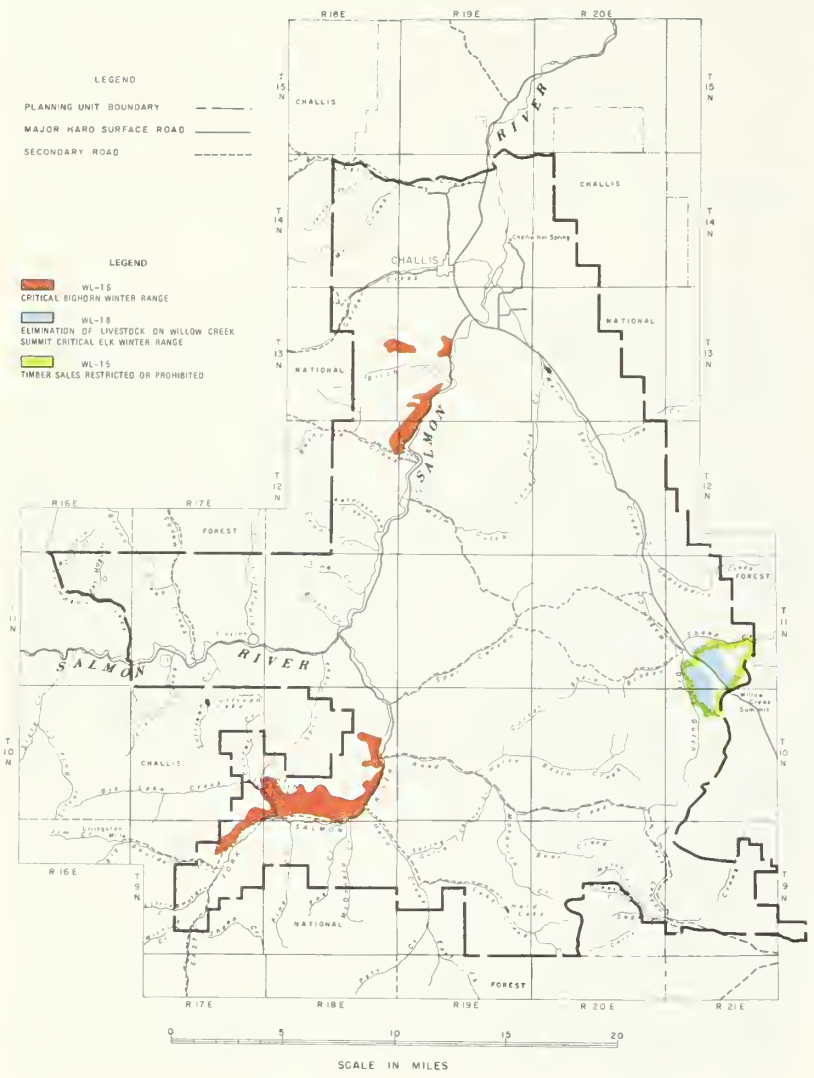
ALLOW LIVESTOCK ON THE WILD HORSE RANGE.

A previous, tentative recommendation to restrict livestock grazing was viewed as an unreasonable limitation that would cause heavy adverse impacts on the local economy.

PROVIDE FOR THE ACQUISITION OR EXCHANGE OF STATE LANDS WITHIN THE WILD HORSE BOUNDARY.

Since the State does not recognize or provide for wild horse grazing on their lands, wild horse management (or exclusion) is not feasible without continuous ownership within the wild horse range.

One of many bands of wild horses found in the Challis Planning Unit



WILDLIFE

Wildlife

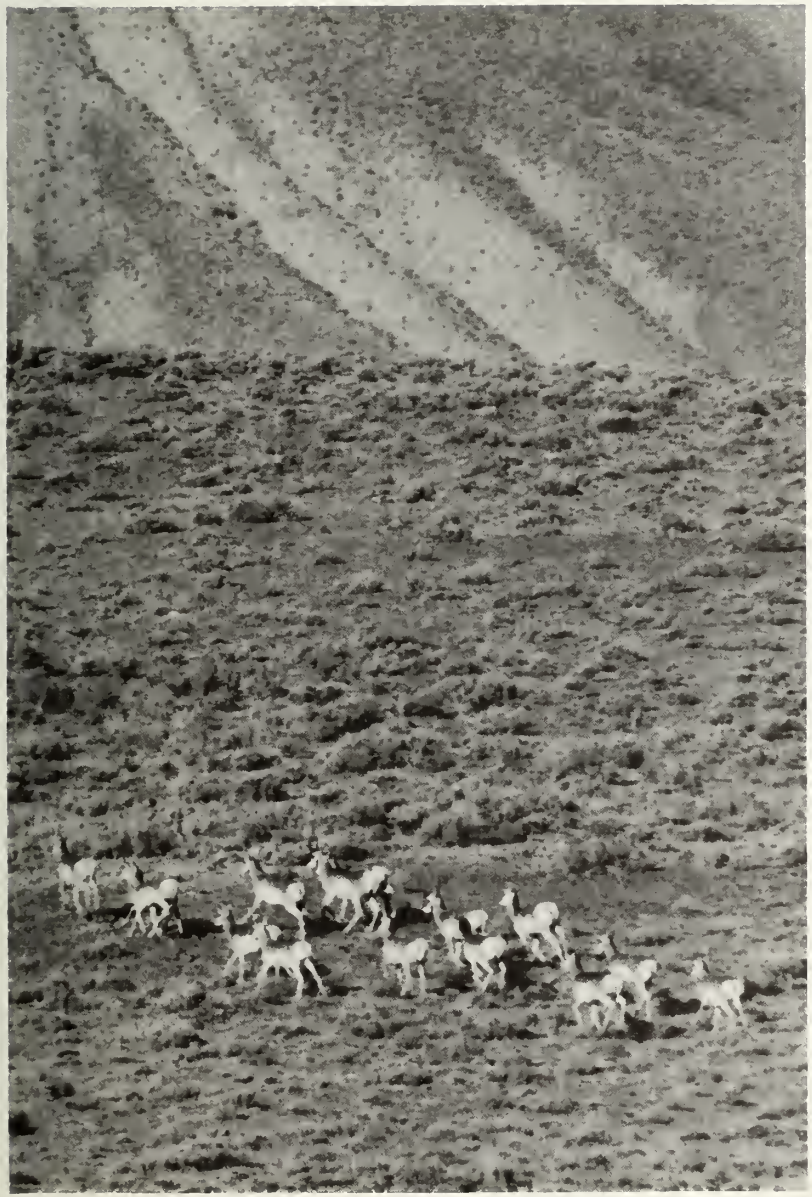
Big game, small game and upland game birds are very important to the Challis Unit. Big game consists of mule deer, elk, pronghorn antelope, bighorn sheep, black bear and mountain lion. Approximately 3,000 mule deer spend six winter and early spring months in the unit and 500 deer are yearlong residents. Bighorn sheep (80–90) spend seven months in the unit. About 60–70 of these bighorn sheep are found along the East Fork and approximately 20 at Birch Creek, four to five miles south of Challis. Most of the East Fork herd leaves BLM administered land just prior to lambing.

One hundred and fifty elk graze five months during the winter, mainly in the Dry Canyon–Willow Creek Summit area. Some 600–700 pronghorn antelope are yearlong residents and an additional 50 antelope spend just the five winter months. Upland game birds consist of sage grouse, blue grouse, ruffed grouse, spruce grouse, chukars, Hungarian partridge and mourning dove.

Major decisions related to wildlife will:

IMPROVE ALL WILDLIFE HABITAT CONDITIONS AND FURNISH AT LEAST 7,800 AUMs OF FORAGE FOR BIG GAME SPECIES IN THE CHALLIS UNIT AS FOLLOWS:

320 elk during the winter and spring
5,620 mule deer during the winter and spring
1,160 antelope in the winter and 910 antelope in the spring, summer and fall
220 bighorn sheep during the winter and spring



Antelope Flats, Warm Springs Allotment

EXCLUDE LIVESTOCK GRAZING FROM 5,790 ACRES OF CRITICAL BIGHORN SHEEP WINTER RANGE IN THE EAST FORK AND BIRCH CREEK AREAS.

Elimination of this competition allows free choice of highest quality forage by wintering bighorns.

EXCLUDE WATER DEVELOPMENT TO DISCOURAGE LIVESTOCK USE ON DRY CANYON ELK WINTER RANGE AND ALL CRITICAL BIGHORN SHEEP WINTER RANGE.

This reduces competition for available forage on these critical areas.

PROVIDE FOR THE CANCELLATION OF GRAZING PRIVILEGES ATTACHED TO RANCHES WHICH WILL BE DEVELOPED AS SUBDIVISIONS FOR RESIDEN–TIAL USE.

The loss of desirable bottomland forage areas will place increased pressure on public lands to support wildlife populations. This decision will relieve some grazing pressure from the public lands.

PROHIBIT DETRIMENTAL VEGETATION MANIPULATION ON CRITICAL OR KEY ANTELOPE RANGES.

The extensive elimination of sagebrush would have a deleterious impact on antelope.

PROHIBIT DETRIMENTAL LOGGING OPERATIONS ON CERTAIN WILLOW CREEK ELK WINTER RANGES.

Tree cover forms critically needed thermal and escape cover for wintering elk.

Fisheries

Idaho streams produce about 55% of the steelhead, 34% of the spring chinook and 41% of the summer chinook in the entire Columbia River system. The Salmon River drainage accounts for about 50% of the steelhead and 98% of the salmon spawned in Idaho.

Salmon and steelhead use more than 90 miles of streams in the unit for migration, spawning and rearing. The Salmon River, East Fork River and Herd Creek are major salmon and steelhead habitats. Portions of 10 smaller streams in the unit also sustain spawning runs of anadromous fish.

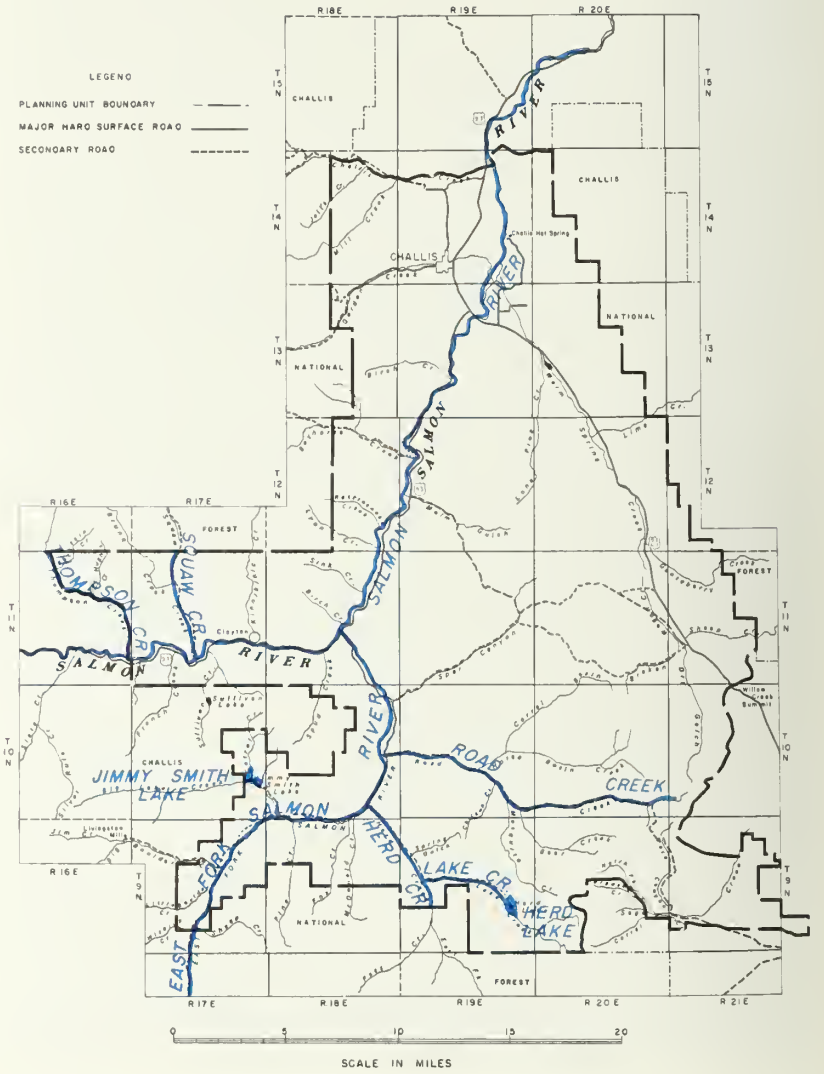
About half of the 47 perennial streams in the unit support resident trout populations. Jimmy Smith Lake (45 acres) and Herd Lake (23 acres) also contain trout. Rainbow trout are the most common game fish in the unit, partly due to planting of hatchery fish by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. Sculpins are the most abundant non-game fish.

Fishing is a major recreational activity in the unit and accounts for an estimated 10,000 angler days each year.

Major fisheries decisions will:

PLACE HIGH PRIORITY ON IMPROVING AQUATIC AND RIPARIAN HABITAT BY:

- Implementing livestock management systems designed to improve riparian habitat.
- Developing a coordinated aquatic and riparian improvement program on all lands in the Herd Creek drainage irrespective of ownership through the Experimental Stewardship Program.



FISHERIES

- Improving anadromous fish habitat by excluding livestock use from 3.25 miles of Herd Creek, one half mile of Lake Fork Creek and one quarter mile of Squaw Creek. These exclosures, in addition to protecting riparian habitat, will provide an opportunity to compare the effectiveness of livestock management systems with total livestock exclusion.
- Improving aquatic habitat on Road Creek by retirement of grazing privileges attached to ranches sold to subdividers, by fencing and excluding livestock from 1.5 miles of key riparian habitat and by reducing streambank usage in the upper portion of the drainage by improved livestock management.
- Delaying spring turnout to the fullest extent practicable to reduce livestock use of riparian areas.
- Closely monitor improvement of riparian habitat and make periodic management changes or provide additional protection to the extent needed to make reasonable progress.

COOPERATE WITH IDAHO FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT TO ACQUIRE WATER RIGHTS AND IMPROVE HABITAT FOR ANADROMOUS FISH ON THOMPSON CREEK AND SQUAW CREEK.

Those streams can provide important spawning habitat if minimum water flow can be provided.

Diversion dam on the Salmon River interferes with anadromous fish runs

Watershed

Presently the total sediment yield from the unit is 436,628 tons annually. Estimated geologic erosion is 150,078 tons. Therefore, 286,550 tons of sediment is produced by all the uses of the land that reduce vegetation cover and disturb the soil.

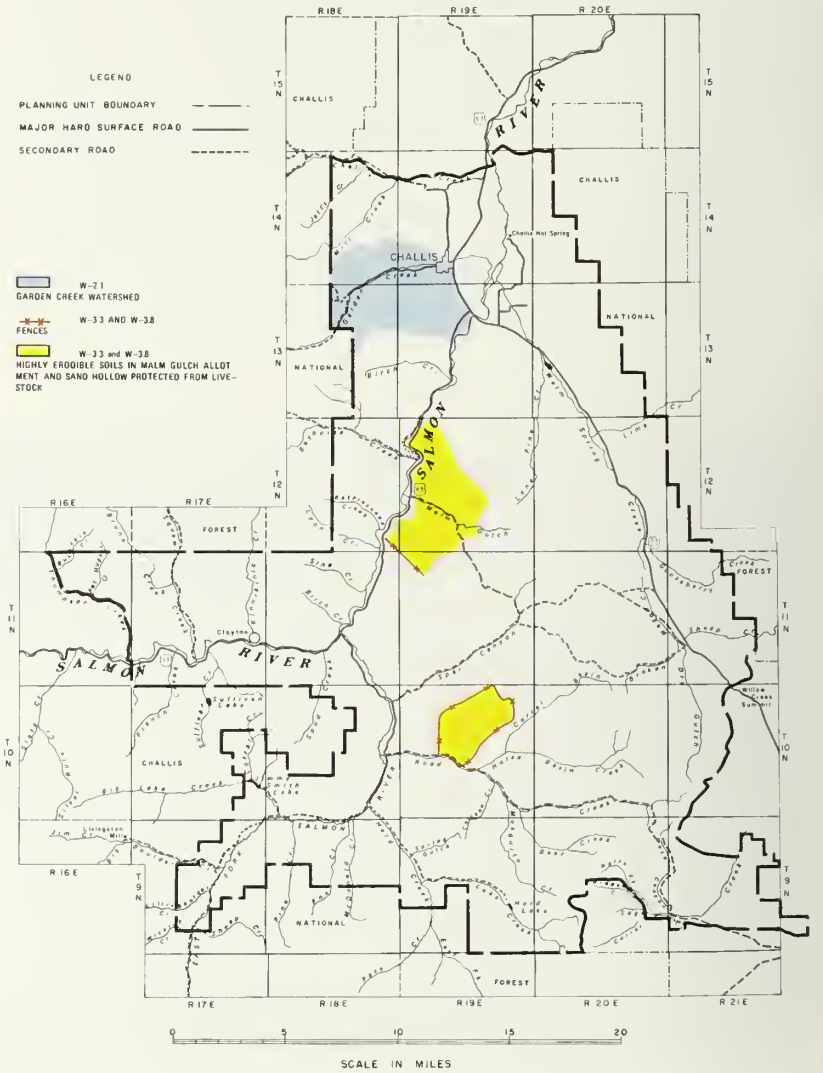
Reduced levels of grazing, coupled with grazing management systems that provide a systematic rest or deferment from spring grazing, will result in an increase in total ground cover by live vegetation and litter.

The major beneficial impacts to vegetative cover as a result of the decisions would be the increase in the acreage of good condition range and the reversal, in a considerable amount, of the downward trend in condition. It is estimated that at the end of 15 years the amount of good condition range would increase from 33,815 acres to 88,260 acres; fair condition range would increase from 145,438 acres to 117,786 acres and poor condition range would decrease from 103,565 acres to 76,716 acres.

Decisions related to watersheds will:

CONSIDER WATER QUALITY AND QUANTITY AS FIRST PRIORITY IN THE GARDEN CREEK DRAINAGE.

Conflicting uses will be restricted. Protection of this watershed is critical since it serves as the sole source of municipal water for the town of Challis.



WATERSHED

PROTECT FROM LIVESTOCK AND WILD HORSE GRAZING ALL VEGETATION IN THE MALM GULCH ALLOTMENT (9,136 ACRES) AND THE SAND HOLLOW WATERSHED (3,905 ACRES) OFF–ROAD VEHICLE USE WILL ALSO BE RESTRICTED IN THESE AREAS.

The soils in these areas are highly erodible. They are contributing significant amounts of sediment to the Salmon River and its tributaries.

RESERVE, AS A GENERAL GOAL, AN AVERAGE OF 50% OF ALL FORAGE PRODUCTION (BY WEIGHT) ON SUITABLE RANGE FOR PLANT MAINTENANCE, SOIL PROTECTION AND STABILIZATION AND NONCONSUMPTIVE WILDLIFE HABITAT. UNPALATABLE VEGETATION WOULD ALSO SERVE TO PROTECT THE SOIL RESOURCE AND PROVIDE WILDLIFE HABITAT COVER.

This forage reservation is required to sustain plant growth and vigor. It also serves as a basis for future improvements of range condition and productivity.

Malm Gulch watershed has been closed to grazing and vehicular traffic to control erosion

Recreation

The Challis Planning Unit offers the public opportunities for hunting, fishing, boating, sightseeing, rockhounding, snowmobiling, scenic drives, picnicking and other outdoor activities. There are 17 recreation sites which are suitable for camping or picnicking. Some of these sites have a minimum of facilities at present, but offer a potential for further development. Eleven sites have been developed for recreational use. In the summer of 1977, the Bayhorse and East Fork recreation sites alone accommodated 39,000 visitor use days. A great potential exists for developing recreation sites all along the Salmon River.

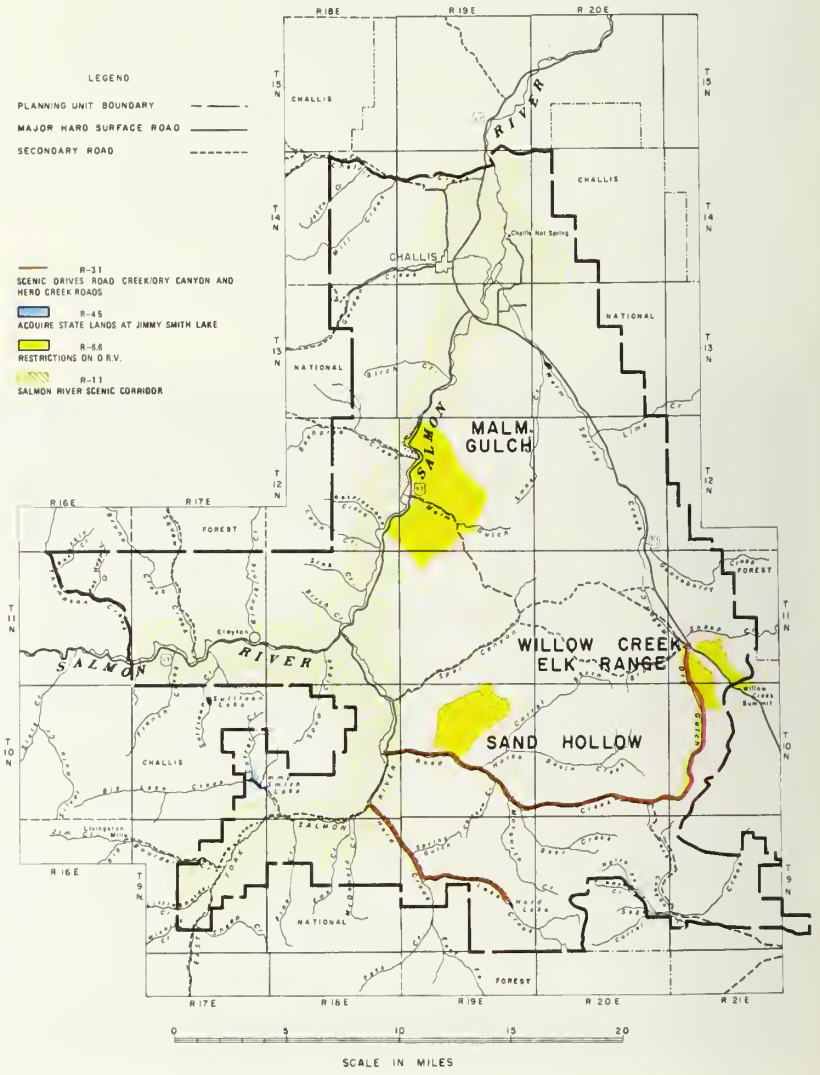
Major recreation decisions will:

PROVIDE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MANAGEMENT PLAN BY 1983 FOR THE SALMON RIVER CORRIDOR BASED ON A DISTRICT–WIDE STUDY.

This corridor attracts much of the public use in the District and must be planned and managed on a coordinated, District-wide basis.

PROVIDE FOR COOPERATION WITH THE FEDERAL POWER COMMISSION ON POWERSITE WITHDRAWAL REVOCATION ALONG THE SALMON RIVER.

These withdrawal lands have not been developed to serve the purpose of the withdrawal.



RECREATION

BLM recreation site near the East Fork

DESIGNATE ROAD CREEK/DRY CANYON ROAD AND HERD CREEK ROAD AS "SCENIC DRIVES".

This will provide additional opportunities for sightseeing and driving for pleasure.

PROVIDE FOR THE ACQUISITION, THROUGH EX–CHANGE, OF STATE LANDS AROUND JIMMY SMITH RESERVOIR.

The lands are needed to support recreational developments.

PROVIDE FOR RESTRICTIONS ON ORVs FOR MALM GULCH, SAND HOLLOW AND WILLOW CREEK ELK WINTER RANGE PENDING THE COMPLETION OF ORV STUDY AND DESIGNATIONS.

These interim closures are required to protect fragile and highly erosive landscapes and to protect critical elk winter range.

Lands

There will be significant increases in permanent and transient populations in Custer County. Recreational use and mineral development will create higher demand for residential property and attending utility services. Public lands will be needed for residential and industrial purposes and for utility rights-of-way. The limited amount of private land in the vicinity of Challis will create increasing demands for development of public lands.

The major lands decisions will:

PROVIDE LAND FOR URBAN EXPANSION IN THE CHALLIS AREA (230 ACRES) AND THE CLAYTON AREA (75 ACRES).

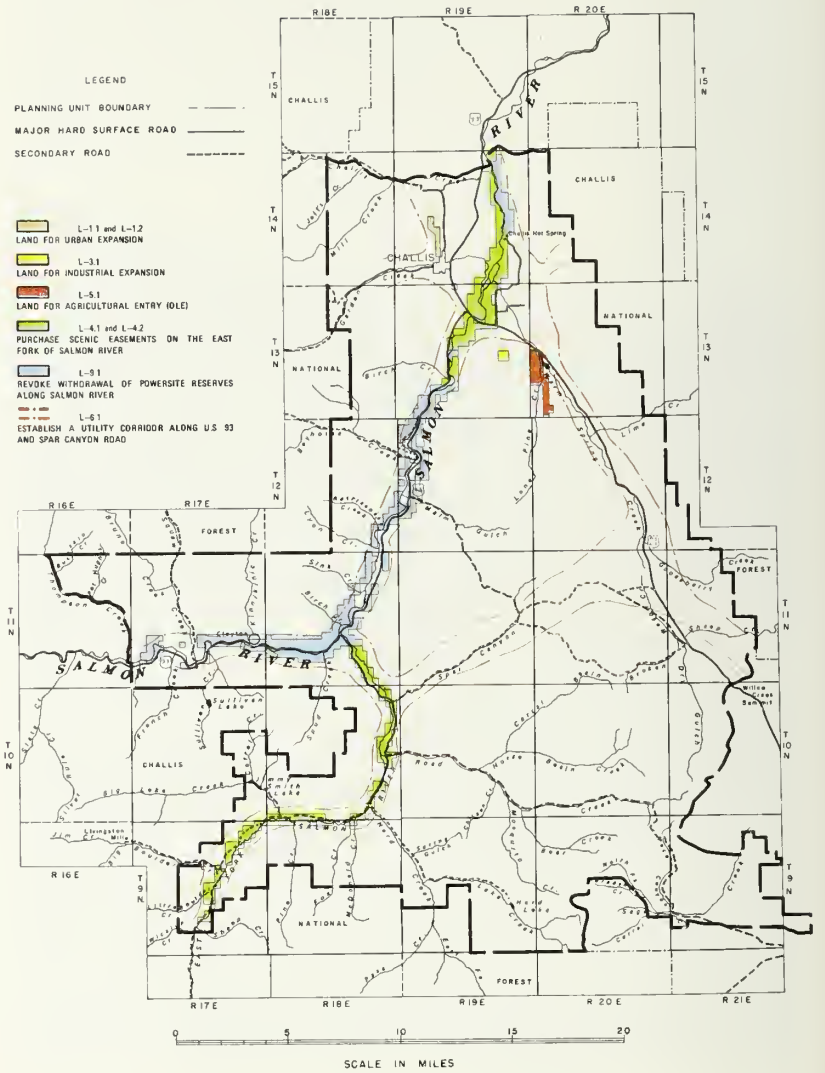
These lands would provide room for urban expansion which will result if mining potentials are developed. Lands in private ownership would be developed first, with public lands available as demand increases.

PROVIDE LAND FOR INDUSTRIAL EXPANSION IN THE CHALLIS AREA (160 ACRES).

In addition to private lands, these public lands will be needed to support the proposed mine development.

PROVIDE LAND FOR AGRICULTURAL USE (760 ACRES).

There is a demonstrated demand for productive agriculture land in the area. These lands were selected because they have good potential for agricultural development with minimum conflicts with antelope range.



LANDS

Forest Products

PROVIDE FOR PURCHASE OF SCENIC EASEMENTS ON EAST FORK AND SALMON RIVER.

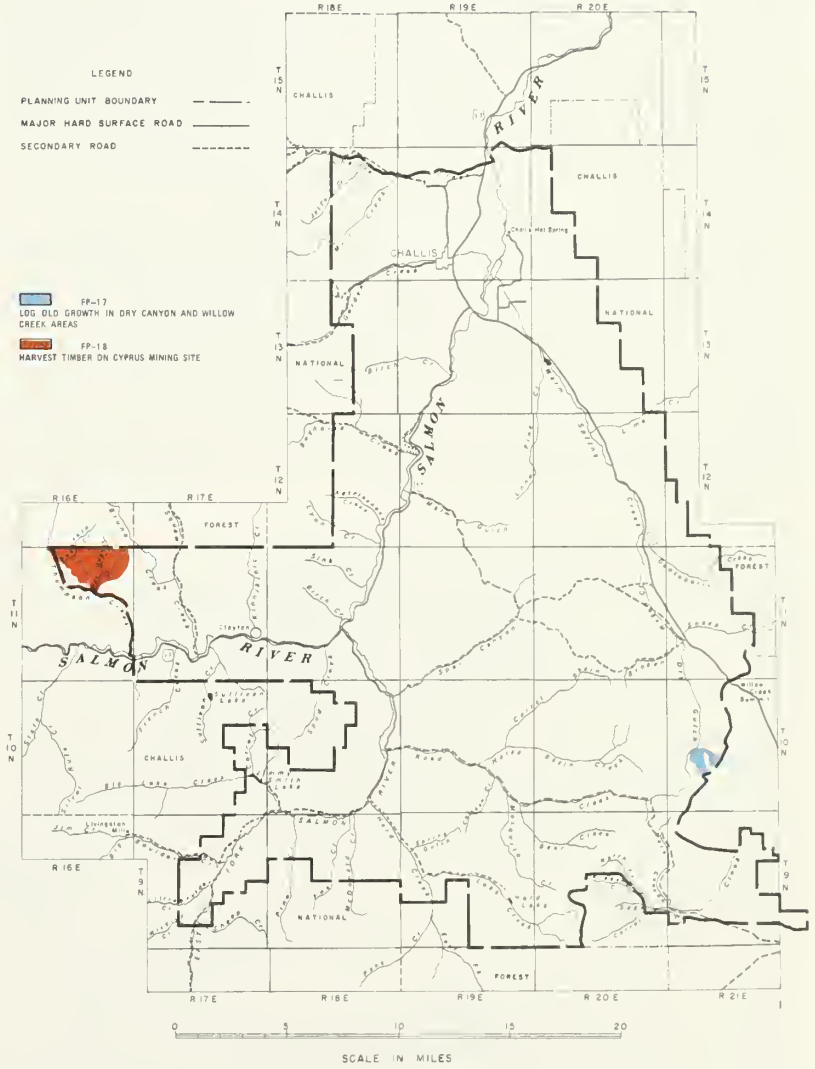
This is needed to support the heavy recreational demand along the river corridor. A District-wide river corridor study will be initiated to determine future management direction.

ESTABLISH A UTILITY CORRIDOR ALONG U.S. 93 AND SPAR CANYON ROAD.

This corridor is needed to service the demand for increased power capacity for local consumption and mining development.

PROPOSE A REVOCATION OF POWERSITE RESERVES ALONG THE SALMON RIVER. THIS WILL BE COORDINATED WITH THE FPC.

These areas are not being used for the purpose they were withdrawn and they should be returned to mutiple-use management. The potential for power development is very low and it is improbable that these sites would ever be developed.



FOREST PRODUCTS

(Forest Products continued next page)

(Forest Products continued)

There are approximately 50,000 acres of timber lands within the Challis Planning Unit. These lands are found in the higher elevations, creek bottoms and on north and northeast slopes. Available moisture during the growing season is the controlling factor in the establishment and growth of the timber. Productive timber lands (those acres capable of producing 20 cubic feet/acre/year) consist of 39,466 acres or 79 percent of the total timber lands in this unit. Another 3,000 acres are on slopes too steep or fragile for timber management purposes.

Douglas-fir and lodgepole pine are the predominant species on the forest sites. In the creek bottoms and moist locations, these species are mixed with Engelmann spruce and aspen stands.

Almost half (15,517 acres) of the total timbered lands in the planning unit are found within the drainages of Thompson Creek, Squaw Creek and Kinnikinic Creek. This area is located in T. 11N., R. 16 and 17 E., north of the main Salmon River in the west end of the unit.

The major forestry decisions will:

PROVIDE FOR TIMBER DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS.

Wood products are needed to support local sawmill operations which are important to the area's economy.

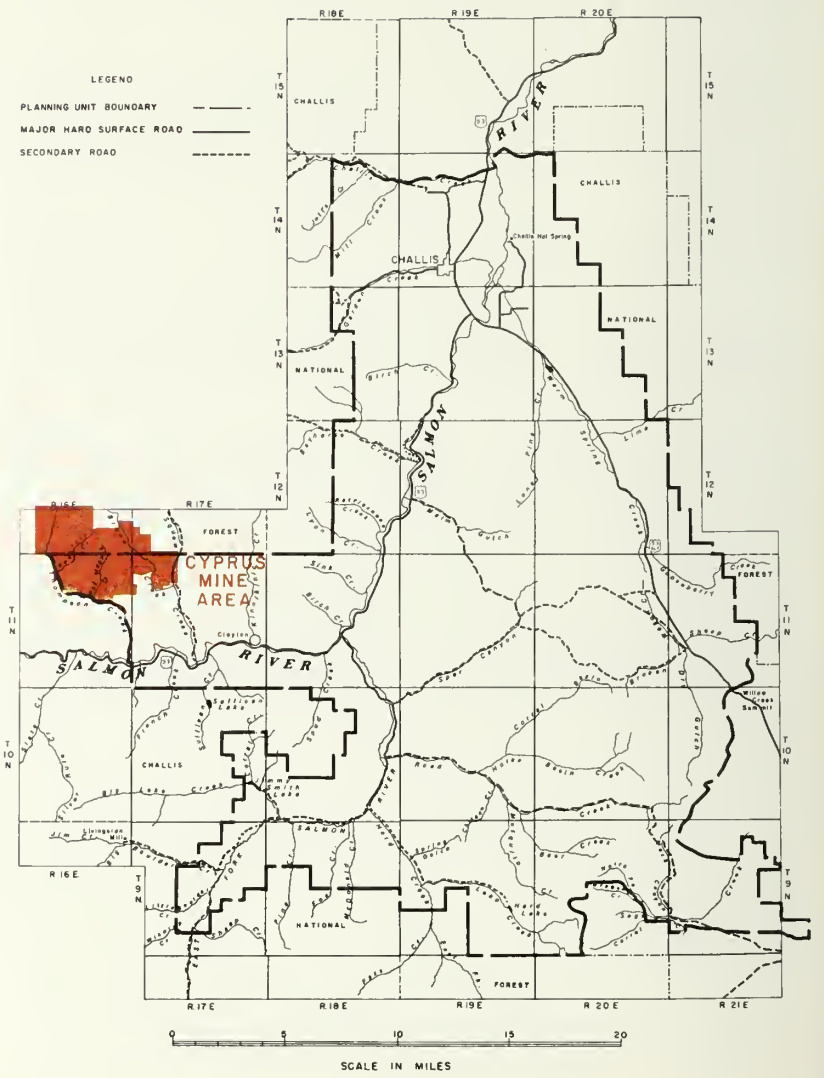
PROVIDE FOR LOGGING OF REMAINING OLD GROWTH TIMBER IN DRY CANYON AND WILLOW CREEK AREAS.

These stands should be harvested before they deteriorate to the point that the wood loses its commercial value.

PROVIDE FOR HARVESTING OF TIMBER ON CYPRUS MINING SITE.

This harvest will salvage all usable wood products in advance of the mining operation. The proposed mining operation requires removal of timber and it should be harvested and used — not wasted.

Minerals



MINERALS

Tungsten, lead, silver, zinc, molybdenum and fluorspar are the most commonly occuring minerals in this unit. The interest in mining is one reason why the country was originally settled. At present there is increased mining activity and exploration in the area lying generally west of the Salmon River. Many of the old mines are being further explored as well as some new areas, notably the Pat Hughes Creek area for molybdenum and from the old Bayhorse townsite north to Garden Creek for fluorspar.

Sand and gravel are common throughout the area; but due to transportation costs, have never been developed except for local needs.

Gem stones, agate, jasper, opal, sard, and onyx are found scattered throughout the unit. Several geothermal hot springs are found within the unit and could provide a source of power in the future.

The major minerals decisions will:

DEFER MAJOR RESOURCE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CYPRUS MINE AREA PENDING A DECISION ON THE MINING OPERATION.

The proposed mine development appears certain so other resource developments would not be justified as the investment would be lost.

ESTABLISH A COORDINATED APPROACH WITH OTHER FEDERAL AND STATE AGENCIES TO INSURE PROPER PERMIT ISSUANCE, COMPLIANCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS FOR THE AREA ADJACENT TO THE NATIONAL FOREST BOUNDARY.

Since the land affected by the Cyprus mine includes land owned or administered by several State and Federal agencies, close coordination is necessary.

The Bayhorse Mine.
The mine is being studied for reopening

Cultural Resources

More than 250 historical, archaeological and paleontological sites have been inventoried in the Challis Planning Unit. Prehistoric human occupation of the planning unit extends back approximately 12,000 years. The first contact between Euro-Americans and the Northern Shoshoni was with the Lewis and Clark expedition in 1804, on the Lemhi River. Within 75 years, this initial contact proved to be disastrous to the indigenous population in the Salmon River region.

The Challis Planning Unit has a history of mining activity which began in the mid-1860's when gold and other valuable minerals were located in the surrounding mountains. Towns to supply the various mines in the region were soon being founded. These included Clayton, Crystal, Bayhorse and Challis. Freight and stage roads were established to connect these towns with larger population centers.

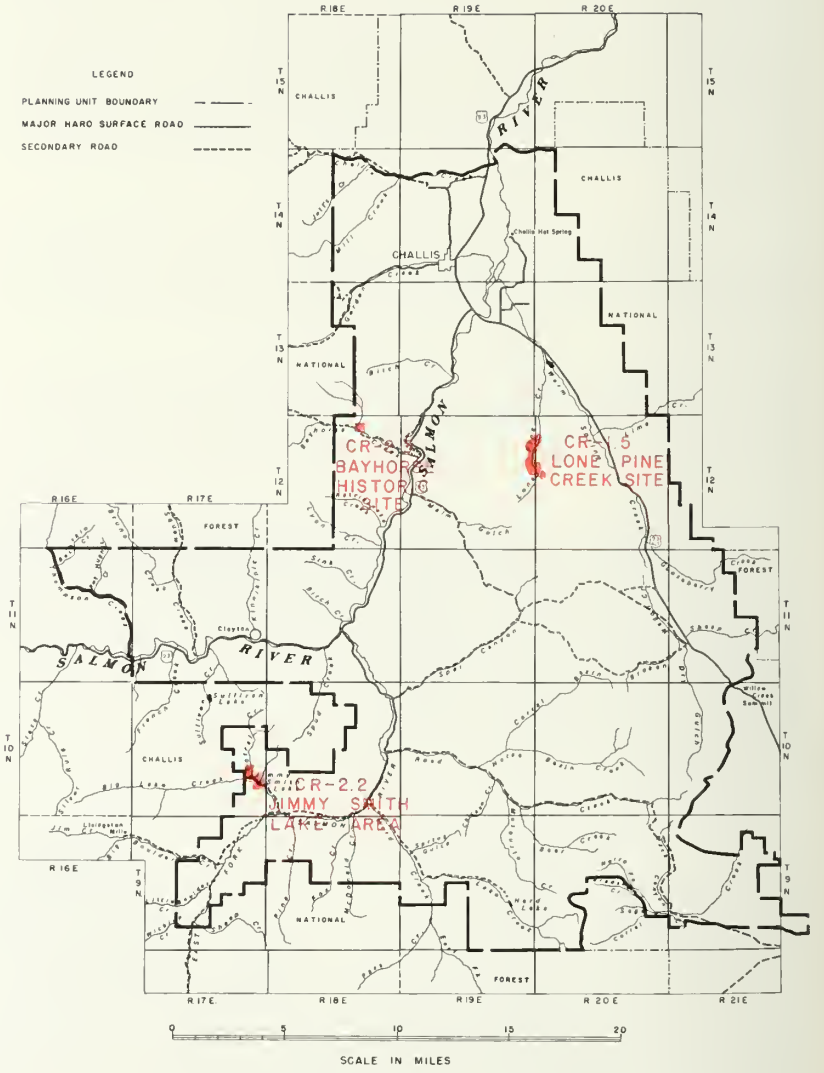
This expansion finally resulted in the Sheepeater War of 1879, after which the Indians were forced onto reservations.

Custer County was created in 1881 and Challis was elected county seat. By the late 1890's or early 1900's, the mines began to fade and the discouraged miners gradually began to move out or acquire farms and ranches in the surrounding valley.

Major cultural resource decisions will:

CONTINUE TO MONITOR AND INVESTIGATE THE LONE PINE CREEK SITE.

Exploratory work on the site indicates that local and regional historic perspectives can be expanded with additional archaeological investigation of the Lone Pine site. This will allow improved management of cultural resources.



CULTURAL RESOURCES

PROVIDE FOR THE ACQUISITION OR EXCHANGE OF STATE LAND IN THE JIMMY SMITH CLASS I AREA.

This acquisition is needed to protect important archaeological sites.

PROVIDE INTERPRETIVE DEVELOPMENT OF HISTORIC BAYHORSE SITE.

Bayhorse is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The interpretive development would enhance the public's awareness of the role mining played in the development of this region.

Transportation

As part of MFP—II, all existing and proposed roads were evaluated by the District Resource Specialist who made recommendations as to which roads were important, unimportant or in conflict with their particular resource. All roads were then prioritized and classified as primary, secondary or incidental or they were recommended for closure. Roads not identified on the transportation overlay (M2—T—1) will be abandoned. This process defines specific use patterns and maintenance schedules for all roads in the transportation system (T—1.1).

Cumulative Environmental Overview

Environmental impacts resulting from lands and realty decisions are generally beneficial. Socio-economic factors are most often affected by lands decisions. These decisions are designed to promote positive results, where possible.

Existing mineral development occurs in the Bayhorse Mining District, southwest of Challis. Mineral development tends to commit the total immediate surrounding land and associated resources.

The entire planning unit is open to location under the General Mining Laws. Decisions that affect existing developments should result in positive socio-economic impacts with moderate to low environmental impacts. The proposed Cyprus Mine will likely have positive economic impacts and negative environmental impacts. An Environmental Impact Statement will be prepared prior to development.

Certain impacts are anticipated from livestock grazing on public lands. Under the recommended livestock management systems, competition for forage between wild horses, wildlife and livestock will be minimized. These and other impacts were evaluated in depth during the development of allotment management plans and the Supplement to the Challis Environmental Impact Statement.

Generally, the decision concerning wild horses will have positive environmental impacts. Removal of a portion of the Challis herd will result in more realistic land use management by reducing conflicts with wildlife and livestock. Reducing the numbers of both wild horses and livestock will bring forage consumption into line with range carrying capacity. These impacts were also analyzed in detail in the Challis Environmental Impact Statement.

Interrelationships With Other Plans

The preparation and approval of the Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) on the Range Management Program for the Challis Planning Unit was a key step in the public review and management decision process. Throughout the planning and impact assessment process numerous federal, state and local agencies, as well as members of the general public offered suggestions for improving the Challis plan. Our staff contacted many representatives of these groups to ensure that our planning efforts and management decisions did not conflict with the land use plans of other agencies. We have listened to and considered all of the comments that people have submitted and we used as many of them as possible.

The Challis plan was coordinated with several specific planning efforts. Recreation, cultural and aesthetic elements correspond with the "Idaho Outdoor Recreation Plan". County government officials were consulted as the plan was developed and informed of results. Decisions dealing with land are in accord with the land use and zoning requirements for Custer County. The plan was also coordinated with the Challis National Forest.

Action Beyond The Management Framework Plan

This plan will be followed by on-the-ground actions. Some decisions in the plan may require more detailed planning prior to implementation.

Development projects are subject to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act. An environmental assessment will be prepared for each action whether it is initiated by industry or BLM, unless it was adequately covered in the Supplemental FEIS. If the impacts are unacceptable, the proposed action may be modified or rejected.

At the present some of those decisions have already been or are being implemented.

The MFP decisions will be used in programming and budgeting for the annual work plan. Since on-the-ground actions are contingent upon funding by Congress, it may be some time before some of these decisions are implemented.

District staff will consult with the Challis Stewardship Committee and the Grazing Advisory Board prior to implementing range improvements. These groups will also advise the District in the preparation of allotment management plans which deal with specific site developments and localized problems. The Public Rangelands Improvement Act, under which the stewardship committee functions, requires consultation, coordination and cooperation with the allotee.

In response to changing resource conditions and management requirements, the Challis plan will be updated and management decisions will be revised as new information becomes available. The public will have opportunities for review and input into the planning process when major revisions are made.

Glossary

As in most systems, BLM's Planning System has its own "language". To help you understand some of the terms used in this procedure, a glossary is included for reference:

Allotment Management Plan (AMP) — A detailed plan for intensively managing and improving a specific grazing allotment.

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) — An area requiring special management attention to protect or prevent irreparable damage to important historic, cultural or scenic values, fish and wildlife resources or other natural systems or processes, or to protect life and safety from natural hazards.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) — A document analyzing the environmental impact of proposed or recommended actions and its alternatives on the human environment.

Habitat Management Plan (HMP) — A detailed plan to develop and manage a specific area for increased forage production or habitat conditions for aquatic or terrestrial wildlife.

Management Framework Plan (MFP) — A planning decision document which establishes, for a given planning area, land use allocations, coordination guidelines for multiple use, and management objectives to be achieved for each class of land use or protection. It is the Bureau's Land Use Plan. It is prepared in three steps: Step One — Resource Recommendations; Step Two — Impact Analysis and Alternative Development; and Step Three — Decision Making.

Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) — Any vehicle capable of, or designed for, travel on or immediately over land, water, or other natural terrain. Excludes registered motorboats, emergency and government vehicles.

Planning Unit — A portion of the Salmon District used for assembling resource inventory data and developing land use plans. For each planning unit the District Manager prepared a Unit Resource Analysis and a Management Framework Plan.

Public Lands — Public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management. The BLM also manages a federal mineral estate where stewardship is limited to subsurface portions of the land.

Unit Resource Analysis (URA) — A basic source of information on the land and its resources used as one of the foundations of the MFP. It consists of resource maps, physical profile and resource inventory summaries. It also evaluates resource potential and capability of the land to fill the public's need for lands, minerals, recreation, wildlife, watershed, forest products, and range management.

Back Cover: An East Fork ranch with BLM land in background